United Nations A/57/PV.91

General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

91st plenary meeting
Monday, 23 June 2003, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda, allocation of items and organization of work

The President: Members will recall that, at its 19th plenary meeting, on 20 September 2002, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 92 to the Second Committee.

In order for the General Assembly to proceed expeditiously on the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on the Integrated and Coordinated Implementation of and Follow-up to the Outcomes of the Major United Nations Conferences and Summits in the Economic and Social Fields, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 92 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 92?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 92 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields

Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on the Integrated and Coordinated Implementation of and Follow-up to the Outcomes of the Major United Nations Conferences and Summits in the Economic and Social Fields (A/57/48)

Draft resolution (A/57/48, para. 23)

The President: It gives me special pleasure and satisfaction to present to the General Assembly the outcome of the work of its Ad Hoc Working Group on the Integrated and Coordinated Implementation of and Follow-up to the Outcomes of the Major United Nations Conferences and Summits in the Economic and Social Fields.

As members know, the notion of the integrated implementation of the major United Nations conferences has been followed by the Czech presidency as one of its priorities since the very beginning of the fifty-seventh session. In January 2003, I made it an urgent priority of my presidency to see the successful completion of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

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The challenge before the Working Group was considerable. The Assembly had entrusted it with making concrete recommendations to ensure that the United Nations supported, in the most efficient way possible, the implementation of the ambitious and detailed set of development goals agreed at major United Nations conferences and summits. When we began our work in January, many doubted whether the Group would be able to tackle that complex and comprehensive issue adequately within the given time limits. We were well aware of our ultimate goal but unsure of the path to follow.

Yet the Working Group, guided by the Bureau, engaged in a firm and demanding programme of work, and as we went along, what we could achieve became clearer, as did the fact that we agreed on many issues and that our commitment to the goals agreed at conferences — from the Children's Summit to the Millennium, Monterrey and Johannesburg summits — was alive and strong, much stronger than our areas of divergence. The draft resolution born out of that intense — and, I agree, at times difficult — process is before members today. I am convinced that it is a good outcome. It will help to make the work of the Organization more relevant and more visible, and will increase its political importance by focusing it on the implementation of conference outcomes.

I am particularly pleased that there is general agreement to look at the work programme of the Second Committee; that will weave a certain logic and topicality into its work. I also very much welcome the idea of holding a politically attractive major event in 2005 to review progress achieved in implementing commitments made during conferences and summits. We should all work with our Governments and our partners to ensure that commitments made are expeditiously implemented so that concrete advances are made when we meet in 2005. Another important achievement is the agreement that the General Assembly should decide on the periodic review of the implementation of conference outcomes on a case-by-case basis.

The draft resolution will give new impetus to the coordination work of the Economic and Social Council. By better planning its work on common conference themes, the Council will be able to engage more intensely with the functional commissions and with various other parts of the United Nations system in its deliberations. We have asked the functional commissions to review their working methods in the light of the changes that have been made by the Commission for Sustainable Development. We have given clear guidance to organizations of the United Nations system to work closely together to help Governments to implement conference outcomes. The Council's coordination segment, to be held in July, will be able to build on those recommendations and to launch measures for their implementation.

As I told the Working Group last Tuesday, I see this draft resolution as an important milestone that will contribute to the strengthening of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council and to the implementation of the programme of reform launched by the Secretary-General. Our achievements go beyond that. We have demonstrated that the spirit of cooperation and compromise and the principles of multilateralism are very much present. We have shown once again that the United Nations can deliver agreements and concrete measures.

I should like to express my profound thanks to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Group, Ambassador Nana Effah-Apenteng of Ghana and Ambassador Jean de Ruyt of Belgium, who presided over the informal consultations, provided guidance through the whole process and participated tirelessly in the work of the Bureau and in related negotiations. I am also grateful to our facilitator, Mr. Henri Stephan Raubenheimer from the Permanent Mission of South Africa, whose substantive skills, tireless efforts and suggestions greatly helped to finalize the work of the Working Group.

In addition, I should like to express my deep appreciation to all delegations that participated in our deliberations for their continuous engagement, for their ideas and for the collaborative spirit in which they worked throughout many meetings. Moreover, I should like to acknowledge with appreciation the solid and substantive support provided to the Group and the Bureau by the Secretariat, in particular by Mr. Sarbuland Khan and Mr. Nikhil Seth. My personal thanks go also to my team for its hard work and its dedication to this important issue.

We shall now proceed to consider the draft resolution contained in paragraph 23 of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/57/48).

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Chen (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to inform the Assembly of a textual change in paragraph 56 of the draft resolution, on the role of the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies. As it appears in the text distributed to the Assembly, the beginning of that paragraph reads as follows:

> "Calls upon the United Nations system to make the maximum use of its existing coordination mechanisms in order to contribute to the integrated ...".

It should read as follows:

> "Calls for making the maximum use of the existing coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system in order to contribute to the integrated ...".

The President: I thank the representative of the Secretariat for his explanation of that important change.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Ad Hoc Working Group in paragraph 23 of its report (A/57/48), as orally corrected.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution, as orally corrected?

The draft resolution, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 57/270 B).

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I am speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. First, I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting of the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution recommended by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on the Integrated and Coordinated Implementation of and Follow-up to the Outcomes of the Major United Nations Conferences and Summits in the Economic and Social Fields. It attests to the personal interest that you have always shown in this issue of extreme importance for all Member States, in particular developing countries, and for the United Nations system.

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would also like to thank the two Vice-Chairmen, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ghana, Mr. Nana Effah-Apenteng, and the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Belgium, Mr. Jean de Ruyt, for expending such effort, energy and patience in order to conclude the work of the Working Group. I would like also to thank the representative of South Africa, Mr. Henri Raubenheimer, the facilitator, who greatly contributed to the results we have achieved. Finally, I wish to congratulate and thank Mr. Khan, Mr. Seth and Ms. Barthelemy, who, through their dedication and receptiveness have done honour to the Secretariat.

I would like to express the satisfaction of the Group of 77 and China upon the successful conclusion of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group, as well as for the quality and wealth of the debate and discussions that took place in this respect, and which led to important recommendations for the process of implementing the commitments contained in the outcomes of the various United Nations conferences and summits.

As members know, at the beginning of this year, the Group of 77 made the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences the top priority for the 2003 presidency. We are delighted at the results, albeit modest, that were attained. Having personally followed the vicissitudes of the often laborious and sometimes frustrating negotiations, I know that the progress made in achieving this compromise was not easy. The result constitutes a compromise to which the Group of 77 and China made a contribution and which they supported, although it did not meet all of our aspirations.

The essential thing now is to give effect to the provisions of the resolution, some of which require immediate action. I am referring, in particular, to the holding in 2005 of a summit on development and on the Millennium Development Goals. That summit will provide an excellent opportunity to assess the efforts made by all Members in implementing their respective commitments and an opportunity for the adoption of necessary measures to support the development process. In order to be successful, the preparatory work for the summit must begin as soon as possible, particularly with respect to substantive questions. The strengthening of existent follow-up mechanisms in order to assess on a regular basis the progress made in implementation is also of crucial importance and requires immediate action.

The establishment of a horizontal approach for follow-up within the Economic and Social Council will

undoubtedly enable us to examine how the implementation of the conference commitments can help attain the various development goals. By adopting such an approach, the Assembly would reaffirm that conferences are linked, even though each has its own thematic unity and specific follow-up mechanism.

Now, we need, as soon as possible, to get down to drawing up the list of the cross-cutting issues common to all United Nations conferences and summits and to establish a work programme for the Economic and Social Council coordination segment.

As well, all components of the United Nations system must determine the modalities for their participation in this process. In that respect, we welcome the fact that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will actively participate in the process of the assessment and monitoring of progress made in implementation. The trade component is very important in any evaluation process, and UNCTAD remains the only body possessing the means and the expertise necessary to successfully monitor Member States' commitments with respect to access to markets.

One of the most important compromises related to the establishment of indicators, in particular on means of implementation. Those indicators are indispensable tools for assessing progress made by all parties with respect to implementation and its impact on the achievement of the development goals set by the United Nations. In that respect, the Statistical Commission needs to finalize as soon as possible the elaboration of indicators, in particular for the means of implementation. The United Nations system must use all those indicators to monitor the commitments towards implementation of all countries, in particular the developed countries.

Furthermore, the United Nations system has an essential contribution to make to the process of implementing the commitments emanating from the United Nations. At the same time, the United Nations system must have stable and predictable financial resources. The role of both developed and developing Member States is the most important element in that process, as they bear the primary responsibility for implementation. During implementation we will be able to gauge the commitment of all sides, as well as their determination to make our world a better place, in which famine and poverty have been eradicated and the benefits of globalization are better shared, both in commercial and economic terms, in order to bring about sustainable development for all.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): The European Union welcomes the General Assembly's adoption of the draft resolution recommended by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on the Integrated and Coordinated Implementation of and Follow-up to the Outcomes of the Major United Nations Conferences and Summits in the Economic and Social Fields.

We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your interest and support, as well as for the guidance you have provided the Group. We would also like to thank the Vice-Chairmen of the Group — the Permanent Representatives of Belgium and Ghana — as well as the South African facilitator, the members of the Secretariat and all those who contributed in one way or another to the final outcome.

The fact that the Working Group has wrapped up its work is itself a success. Furthermore, it is a success for all of us. It is also an important contribution to the cause of international cooperation and to the peace and security of our world, which we think are mutually reinforcing. I also think that we are all entitled to express our satisfaction and gratitude for this outcome, as it is all-inclusive, balanced and fair to all. We should make good use of this outcome in the future, and maintain the momentum it has created. In the present international situation, an agreement — such as the resolution that has just been adopted — among developed and developing countries on the implementation of the major conferences and summits sends a very positive message, of broader political significance, about the relevance and usefulness of the United Nations system in making our world a better world.

The President: I should like once again to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Jean de Ruyt of Belgium and Ambassador Nana Effah-Apenteng of Ghana, the two Vice-Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Working Group, for having so ably chaired the informal meetings of the Working Group. I am sure that the members of the Assembly join me in extending to them our sincere appreciation.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 92.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.